

THE POWELL PROGRAM

One Step Closer to Cementing Interoperability with Our Interagency Partners

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The United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Forces Warfare Center and School Powell Program Initiative is named after Secretary Colin L. Powell, in recognition of his service in both the Department of Defense and the Department of State, and his extraordinary efforts to create synergy between the two organizations. Secretary Powell was a muddy-boots combat soldier for 35 years, serving two tours in Vietnam, culminating with his last assignment as the 12th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In 1991, General Powell led the campaign that successfully expelled the Iraqi army from Kuwait during Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm putting him in the national spotlight. President George W. Bush nominated him on Dec. 16, 2000 as Secretary of State. He was sworn in as the 65th Secretary of State on Jan. 20, 2001 after being unanimously confirmed by the U.S. Senate. Secretary Powell placed an emphasis on reaffirming diplomatic alliances throughout the world, supporting a national missile defense system, working toward peace in the Middle East and prioritizing sanctions instead of force in potential hot spots such as Iraq. He also focused on reinvigorating U.S. diplomacy through pragmatic reforms in the Department of State's organizational culture and an infusion of resources for personnel, information technology, security and facilities. Powell's multifaceted approach won praise for his efficient administration of the State Department and cordial relations with other governments. Secretary Powell took a leading role in rallying America's allies for military action in Afghanistan following the 9/11 terrorist attacks demonstrating his "whole-of-government approach".¹

Framing the Contemporary Environment and the Problem

Using the whole-of-government approach to current and future challenges is not a new concept. The U.S. Government is a large organization comprised of multiple components and capabilities, which means that no one entity has the capability to face challenges independently. In an environment of finite resources, ensuring that effective collaboration and cooperation occurs is imperative to ensure the success of our nation for addressing complex issues. To date, U.S. Special Operations Forces are limited to counterterrorism

positions advising the National Security Council. This creates a seam where there is a lack of SOF regional expertise and experience within government organizations at the highest levels. Specifically, advising personnel at select agencies and departments in concert with *The 2015 National Security Strategy* directive to combine all of our strategic advantages to expand and solidify the interdependence between agencies and organizations within the United States Government.

The question then materializes — how do we leverage the expertise and experience of the SOF personnel within government organizations to expand and solidify the interdependence between agencies and organizations without spending an exorbitant amount of funding in a budget-constrained environment? Further analysis caused other potential obstacles to surface that require attention. These obstacles encompass overcoming potential manning issues and determining the framework that will enable SOF proponentcy to track and manage the inventory of candidates who possess the required prerequisites to work at the highest levels within the government. Additionally, an education pathway that includes civilian and military education should complement SOF personnel assisting and advising in this capacity. If we attempt to use DoD programs in place already and begin making changes, then we incur potential risk in the counterterrorism fight for what those programs were specifically designed. For example, special operations support teams are made up of United Special Operations Command personnel who serve at DoD and non-DoD agencies where Headquarters, USSOCOM has an enduring requirement to synchronize DoD planning for global operations against terrorist networks.² Finally, looking through different sets of lenses inside and outside the DoD, the assumption can be made that we will encounter institutional resistance that comes with change or implementing new and fresh initiatives. This will have to be addressed.

The Solution

Seeing these challenges and the value of providing SOF regional expertise to the interagency environment, USAJFKSWCS Commanding General, Maj. Gen. Eric P. Wendt, established the Powell Program as an innovative mechanism to place senior SOF Officers

who possess regional expertise and experience within USG organizations. The Powell Program looks to increase the collaboration between the DoD, U.S. Government agencies and Capitol Hill by bringing the capabilities that come from decades of on-the-ground regional and language expertise, formal graduate level, in-country, regional studies education and long-term PCS assignment to the National Capitol Region. Due to U.S. Army Special Forces warrant officers (180A) longevity of uniformed service (30 years of service minus any enlisted service based on the Soldiers Compensation Act of 1949), they are the target population to become Powell personnel. The Powell Program will PCS select senior Special Forces warrant officers to the National Capitol Region to serve at critical country desks in the regional bureaus of the U.S. Department of State, the Office of Congressional and Legislative Liaison and other key positions within the National Capitol Region supporting interagency interoperability and engagement. Officers designated as part of the Powell program are ideally suited to work within the National Capitol Region based on their professional experience and interaction from multiple years of operating in a specific region at a Special Forces group or other SOF units. Additionally, senior Special Forces warrant officers are

combined exchange training, embassy assignments, and Special Operations Command-Forward assignments, etc.) in the region and the number of months in order to show their actual time in theater. The best-qualified candidate would have at least 48 months combined regional experience.

While a regional-specific degree and field of study or experience are highly valued nothing demonstrates commitment and knowledge of a region as much as speaking the language. It would be difficult to represent oneself as an expert in country X if you could not speak the language. More than any other outwardly recognized ability a regional-specific language demonstrates a dedicated effort and knowledge of the region and culture. Language ability is respected and expected by Foreign Service, intelligence community and academia as the minimum standard. Best qualified applicants should have a current DLPT rating of 2/2, or a 2/2 in two or more regional languages in order to demonstrate their expertise in their region.

Education is the bona fides in the beltway. As graduate education is required in most positions, the lack of a formal degree would limit the acceptance and challenge the credibility of the Powell Program officer. While the military mindset often values experience over edu-

“The Powell Program will PCS select senior Special Forces Warrant Officers to the Nation Capitol Region to serve at critical country desks in the regional bureaus of the US Department of State, the Office of Congressional and Legislative Liaison and other key positions within the NCR supporting interagency interoperability and engagement.”

well suited to work in the joint, interagency, intergovernmental and multinational environment based on their education, developed critical thinking skills and understanding of special warfare capabilities and leveraging those capabilities to accomplish common ends. Finally, members serving in the Powell Program may have previously served as Volckmann Operator embeds, serving in developmental embed positions within partner-nation SOF. This service will have provided these warrant officers years of personal experience living in their target country and working directly with host-country personnel, civilians and leaders.

Powell Program Candidate Requirements

The requirements for the Powell Program candidates are mid-grade to senior chief warrant officer four or chief warrant officer five 180As in order to maximize their time at the battalion level and above for higher level experience, in addition to greater regional and language experience, education and SOF-specific related training, which includes courses like the Special Warfare Operational Design Course where graduates receive education and training on planning at the operational levels and above.

If comparable education is where Special Forces Warrants are weaker, regional experience is where they are strong. In order to represent the force in regional-specific matters, the ideal candidate would have a wide range of operational experience in the region. While it is difficult to track this time from Officer Record Briefs, candidates should be able to list the specific missions (joint com-

cation, this is often not the case in an environment where not having a graduate degree is the exception not the norm. For this area specifically, the fully qualified candidate would have an advanced degree from an overseas accredited college or university in any field of study but ideally related to international affairs or regional specific studies.

In lieu of the above requirement, the education requirement is a post graduate degree (MS/MA) from an accredited college or university that included a combination of courses, with at least 24 semester hours in international law and international relations, political science, economics, history in the region, sociology, geography, social or cultural anthropology, language studies, psychology, or regional specific studies.

Career Path and Education Pathway

The Powell Program assignments are classified developmental. As of February 1, the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School is recommending changes to the Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-3, *Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Career Management*, to Headquarters, Department of the Army G1, to reflect Powell as a “most-qualified” developmental position. Career tracks and professional development models for those individuals are being developed and codified with these changes. For promotion boards convening in fiscal year 2016 and after, board guidance will identify that service members serving in Powell assignments are developmental and “most-qualified”. Also regimental slides decks are available for professional development purposes and for

Soldiers who might sit on a promotion/school/command board. This is necessary to ensure these Soldiers remain competitive for future positions and promotion and to facilitate talent management.

The Directorate, Army Special Operations Forces, Human Resources in cooperation with the USAJFKSWCS Commander's Initiative Group is requesting establishment of a personnel development skill identifier for Powell personnel. Once approved, an announcement will occur through a Notification of Future Change to Army-wide Force Managers and the Department of the Army, G1 will top-load the PDSIs as well as update the PDSI roster in DA Pam 611-21, *Military Occupational Classification Structure*. Powell candidates are eligible to apply for PDSI after 12 months of serving in a Powell assignment. The award criteria for the PDSI: 2/2 foreign language proficiency (may be waived, pending approval Commanding General, USAJFKSWCS), 24 months foreign regional experience and possess a master's degree, upon Commanding General, USAJFKSWCS approval, the Special Forces Commandant will provide the service member's name to Department of the Army, G1 to top-load in the personnel's record.

Currently, the USAJFKSWCS Commander's Initiatives Group is examining sending warrant officers, in Powell Program positions, to graduate-level education at foreign universities in their targeted area of responsibility in cooperation with the Special Warfare Education Group. The intent of this education is twofold: to provide education on par with Powell coworkers in the NCR and to grow a Powell network of significant personalities (other students) in their specific AOR. Degrees should be in a field that directly contributes to their work in the NCR including, but not limited to, political science and international relations fields.

Pilot Phase

The USAJFKSWCS Commander's Initiative Group conducted a test run with a Powell pilot in the Department of State. Initial reactions and feedback for the proposed Powell pilot was extremely positive and created a demand signal for the Powells. Additionally, this has prompted the Department of State Diplomatic Security Service's Special Operations Division to create a proposal within the DoS for Powell personnel to be assigned in their division as regional desk officers. The Special Operations Coordinator from DoS Bureau of Diplomatic Security Service is assisting the USAJFKSWCS in creating detail positions in concert with their proposal circulating with the leadership at DoS.

Separately, the USAJFKSWCS will also pursue placing Powells in the U.S. Army's and U.S. Special Operations Command's Offices of Congressional and Legislative Liaison. The Powells assigned to the OCLL will facilitate the partnership between USSOCOM, the Army and Congress in order to ensure support for USSOCOM's and the Army's needs, serve as a liaison to the House and Senate Armed Services Committee's members, professional staff and personal staff to achieve the necessary authorities and funding to support Army and USSOCOM needs, provide liaison to Congress on Army programs, plans and policies, provide expertise and insights on the Congressional aspects of Army programs, plans and policies and liaison support to the USSOCOM Washington Office and the Army Secretariat, Army Staff, Army Commands and direct reporting units.³ The Powells serving in future pilot programs will provide feedback in order to capture lessons learned, best practices and any obstacles that they

might encounter that might hamper progression of the initiative into a fully recognized program of record.

The USAJFKSWCS Commander's Initiatives Group, in conjunction with the pilot, is moving forward with the initiatives from the conceptual phase to programs of record by preemptively drafting the Guidance for Development of the Force in the programming process addressing capability gaps. The final product of the programming process within the Department of Defense, a component's Program Objectives Memorandum displays the resource allocation decisions of the military department in response to, and in accordance with, the Guidance for Development of the Force and Joint Programming Guidance. The next POM is scheduled for fiscal year 2018.

Way Ahead

At full capacity, the Powell Program will provide five-to-seven senior Special Forces warrant officers to serve at critical country desks in the regional bureaus of the U.S. Department of State, the Office of Congressional and Legislative Liaison and other key positions within the National Capitol Region supporting interagency interoperability and interdependence. The Powell Program fully supports *The 2015 National Security Strategy* outcome: build capacity to prevent conflict through combining all of our strategic advantages to expand and solidify the interdependence between agencies and organizations within the United States Government. The NSS states that the interconnection of weak governance and widespread grievance allows extremism to take root, violent non-state actors to rise up and conflict to overtake state structures. To meet these challenges, we will continue to work with partners and through multilateral organizations to address the root causes of conflict before they erupt and to contain and resolve them when they do.⁴ Additionally, the Powell Program engages the Special Operations Command's Line of Operations 2: Global SOF Network and the Army Strategic Priority: A Globally Responsive and Regionally Engaged Army. The Powell Program carefully nests into these efforts by directly leveraging the regional expertise and experience of seasoned and politically astute Special Forces warrant officers who understand the "whole-of-government approach" and addresses the gap within USG organizations, specifically the Department of State. This will facilitate effective collaboration and cooperation occurs, which is imperative to ensure the success of our nation for addressing complex issues. **SW**

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Notes:

1. Secretary of State Colin L. Powell www.state.gov/http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/government/powell-bio.html accessed 24 Feb 2015.
2. U.S. Special Operations Command, USSOCOM Special Operations Support Teams ("SOSTs"), 8 Feb 2011, Unclassified Briefing.
3. The Office of the Chief Legislative Liaison, <http://ocll.hqda.pentagon.mil/default.aspx> accessed 02 Apr 2015.
4. National Security Strategy, Feb 2015, Build Capacity to Prevent Conflict.